

REMARKS

Claims 18-28 are pending. Claims 22-28 are added.

The examiner rejected Claim 18 under 35 USC 112, since the number of columns and jackpots was not upwardly limited. In Claim 18, each jackpot is associated with a particular column. The specification on page 3, lines 22-26, and original Claim 18, convey that there may be any number of columns, as practical for a gaming machine. The specification envisioned any practical number of columns (not limited to 5). Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that there is no requirement in this particular case for expressly limiting the number of jackpots. This was agreed to in a telephone interview on March 18. Further, Claim 18 has been amended to be more definite, as described below.

Claim 18 has been amended to recite the step of, “simultaneously displaying a plurality of jackpots to a player, each one of the N columns being associated with a particular jackpot within the plurality of jackpots, such that there are N jackpots simultaneously displayed to the player that are associated with the columns.” This is supported by at least Figs. 1-4, showing five jackpots being simultaneously displayed to the player to give the player incentive to bet multiple coins in order to win multiple ones of the jackpots. The amendment makes the claimed jackpots definite and also helps to distinguish the claims from Baerlocher (US 7,029,395), discussed below.

Independent Claim 21 is related to Claim 18 but does not expressly associate each of the jackpots with a column. Page 6, lines 22-27, describes an embodiment where each symbol may be associated with its own jackpot. Claim 21 also encompasses the embodiments of Fig. 1-4, wherein there is a particular jackpot associated with each column. Claim 21 includes the limitations of “simultaneously displaying a plurality of different jackpots to a player that may be won in a single game”; “incrementing the plurality of jackpots based on, at least in part, the occurrence of certain icons displayed in the primary game, wherein each jackpot is incremented based on different criteria”; and “awarding one or more of the jackpots to a player in response to the certain jackpot winning outcome occurring in a current game, wherein a plurality of the jackpots is awarded in a single game if certain conditions are met,

and wherein the particular number of jackpots awarded is based on certain conditions other than an outcome of the game.”

In the embodiment described in the specification, the number of displayed jackpots won by the player for a winning outcome of a single game is directly related to the amount of the bet made by the player (page 5, lines 13-23).

Added dependent Claims 22, 23, 24, 26, and 27, relating to the player winning a plurality of jackpots in a single game are supported by at least page 2, lines 4-11, and page 5, lines 13-23.

The hidden jackpots claimed in added Claims 25 and 28 are shown in Figs. 1-4 (by the box with the “?” symbol) and page 5, lines 25-28.

The examiner rejected Claims 18-21 as being anticipated by Baerlocher (US 7,029,395).

Claim 18 recites “simultaneously displaying a plurality of jackpots,” where each jackpot is associated with a different column. A jackpot associated with a particular column is incremented when a jackpot-incrementing symbol is displayed in that column. Baerlocher discloses only a single jackpot for a single game, so there could not be a different jackpot associated with each column nor could there be a plurality of jackpots simultaneously displayed by Baerlocher. Nor could Baerlocher suggest to increment a particular jackpot associated with a column when a jackpot-incrementing symbol is displayed in that column.

Accordingly, Claim 18 and its dependent claims are respectfully submitted to be allowable.

Dependent Claims 19, 26, and 27 recite awarding a plurality of jackpots to the player in a single game, where the particular number of jackpots is based on the amount bet (Claims 19 and 26) or based on other than the outcome of the game (Claim 27). Baerlocher could not suggest those claims.

Independent Claim 21 recites “simultaneously displaying a plurality of different jackpots” as well as “incrementing the plurality of jackpots based on, at least in part, the occurrence of certain icons displayed in the primary game, wherein each jackpot is incremented based on different criteria.” This is similar to Claim 18. As described above, Baerlocher could not suggest these features.

Claim 21 goes on to recite how the game can award a plurality of the jackpots in a single game by stating: “wherein a plurality of the jackpots is awarded in a single game if certain conditions are met, and wherein the particular number of jackpots awarded is based on certain conditions other than an outcome of the game.” In Baerlocher, only a single jackpot may be won in a single game. Even if the prior art disclosed multiple jackpots, such prior art gaming machines would be distinguished from Claim 21 for multiple reasons.

No Need For Terminal Disclaimer

In the first office action on this application, dated June 27, 2007, the examiner provisionally rejected Claim 21 as being obvious over Claim 3 in the then copending U.S. Application 10/658,566 (now US 7,291,066), assigned to the present assignee and having a common inventor. It is respectfully submitted that present Claim 21 is not obvious over the patented dependent Claim 3, reproduced below, from patent 7,291,066, since Claim 3 is unrelated to incrementing or awarding multiple jackpots.

1. A method performed in a gambling game comprising:

displaying an array of symbols in a base game at symbol positions having at least one row and a plurality of columns;

detecting a trigger event that enables a bonus feature;

converting a plurality of the symbols displayed to a plurality of displayed award values located at the symbol positions such that a player sees all the award values; randomly selecting, by a computer, at least one of the values from the displayed award values but not all of the displayed award values; and

awarding a player a bonus award based on the randomly selected at least one of the values, wherein detecting a trigger event comprises detecting one or

more special symbols displayed in the base game, wherein randomly selecting at least one of the values comprises changing values in a column in which a special symbol is located, and wherein awarding a player a bonus award comprises awarding a player a bonus award based on a value appearing in the position of the special symbol after the values have stopped changing.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein detecting a trigger event comprises detecting one or more certain symbols displayed in the base game.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that all Claims 18-28 are allowable and a terminal disclaimer is not needed.

Should the Examiner have any questions, please call the undersigned at (408) 382-0480 x202.

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Date of Signature

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